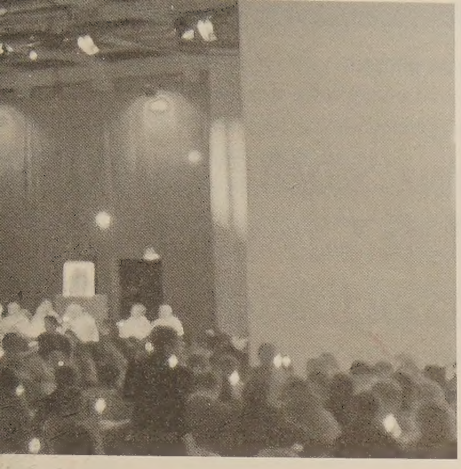

Letter from Taizé

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In the four issues of 2012, the "Letter from Taizé" will develop the theme of "trust among human beings" announced by Brother Alois as an axis of reflection for the coming year. In this first issue, young people who took part in the European meeting share their personal experiences. Other texts on the same topic are available at www.taize.fr/letter.

Leaping Over Walls of Separation

Berlin is a symbol for all those who, throughout the world, try to leap over walls of separation in order to spread trust.
(Brother Alois, *Letter 2012: Towards a New Solidarity*, introduction)

Opening ways of trust responds to an urgent need: although communication is becoming easier and easier, our human societies remain compartmentalized and fragmented. Walls exist not just between peoples and continents, but also close to us, and even within the human heart.

Sinwoo (Korea)

As a Korean, for me the Berlin meeting was a strong sign of hope. Even if no one had predicted the rapid reunification of Germany, it came about. In my country, there are walls not only between North and South but also in South Korea itself. For instance we have a different point of view between the younger generation, which does not care about separation so much, and older people, who still have family members on the other side. Unfortunately each political party has a different point of view, even for humanitarian support to North Korea.

I worked at the information point during the meeting, and I saw with my own eyes how many participants brought medications and medical equipment for North Korea. Even if some medications brought by participants were very small or already used, I was happy to see their warm heart, their generosity. I will try to pray for Korea persistently, trusting that the prayer, which is from God's goodness, has power and that God has a plan for our country. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

Sérgio (Portugal)

Taking part in the European meeting in Berlin, I saw how the wall was the symbol of this separation for many years, and when it came down, it came as a victory for the hopeful, for those who never lost their trust.

In our society, big efforts were made to make people connected; however, there is still a long way to go to make them united. To connect we need to overcome visible barriers, but to unite we have to tear down the invisible ones. These invisible barriers live inside of our hearts and are not taken down by organizations or social movements. These barriers are only taken down by each one of us. It's the exercise of a personal reflection that can break these invisible walls and lay the way to a future in communion with one another and with Christ.

Religions are still ignorant of one another, and Christians themselves are divided into a host of different denominations.

Luc and Claire (France)

The history of the parish that welcomed us in Berlin is an image of reconciliation. The church of St Nikolai was destroyed during the Second World War and the reconstruction only began in the 1980s. When the Wall came down, an organ to accompany the celebrations was still missing. A parish in West Berlin had only one instrument that they offered to them as a sign of reconciliation.

Thanks to the sound of that organ, the parish little by little found some life and the church's restoration could continue. Then, the question of the bells which had disappeared during the war arose. In the vicinity of the Lutheran parish there is a Catholic parish. They decided together that their bells were not dissonant, and rather than buy the same bells as before the war, the parish of St Nikolai chose bells that would ring in harmony with those of the Catholics. A beautiful witness to a Germany which is now building bridges and no longer walls.

Angelo (Italy)

The European meeting was a great experience for me, characterized by a wonderful family (they were Protestant) and new friends made during the meeting. Although it was my fourth pilgrimage of trust, the atmosphere of those days made me realize once again that there should

Continued on last page

LISTENING TO THE WORD

No more visas, free access to the Father!

Christ is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.... His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. (Ephesians 2:11...22)

The author of the Letter to the Ephesians wants to describe the brand-new relationship we have with one another since the death and resurrection of Jesus. He does this by using many terms taken from the political life of Greek society—strangers, residents, fellow citizens, free access, foundation. These technical terms, which seem to come from a ministerial decree regulating the granting of visas, take on a particularly original coloring when they are used to describe the link between believers and Christ and the link between different believers. The use of a political vocabulary is certainly not an accident. The author wants to speak about a new way of being in the world, a new belonging, a "citizenship" which is even more fundamental than that of our passport.

This radical change of identity was born at the foot of the cross, where "he put hostility to death." What kept us far from God, our transgressions, is put behind the cross. God stands between us and our own violence. Accepting to die out of love and entering into the life of eternity, Jesus eliminates the final barrier, the one between us and God.

The vulnerability of the Son is likewise able to "put hostility to death" by eliminating the distance between peoples, in particular between the chosen people and all the others. By the gift of Jesus' life, we all become members of one another. The cross plays the role played by a constitution in a state: it provides the glue necessary for a common identity.

The new body can then be built. We are "fellow citizens with God's people." From now on, what defines us is that we receive something of God's splendor, of God's power, of God's absoluteness, because we have free access to him. In political life, only the powerful have access to those who hold power. Power attracts power. In this new citizenship, we have access to "power" by the event which expresses in the most extreme fashion God's poverty and simplicity: the cross.

It is then evident that there is no more geographical distance: "peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near." In this new state, with no borders, everything "is jointed together and rises" to bring about reconciliation.

Given the identities based on conflict in our societies, what can we do to show that another kind of "citizenship" is possible?

"Putting hostility to death": how do I understand that expression? What does it inspire in me concerning my relationship with others?

A PORTRAIT

Franz Stock (1904-1948) A Life Given for Reconciliation

The first known act of the young German Fr Stock in favor of peace was his participation in 19 in the meeting of Bierville, south of Paris, where thousand young people from all over Europe ca together for peace. At Easter 1928, as a young se narian, he moved to Paris to continue his studies. his friend Joseph Folliet later wrote, "To welcom German student at the theological faculty of P was something inconceivable for the mentality 1928."

Ordained in 1932, he was appointed in Fra two years later, to be in charge of the German Ca olic parish in Paris. Though his joy was great to able to help bring together the two countries loved, the difficulties he would face would be c siderable. As he wrote to his family in his first let "It will not be easy, but we will start by putting trust in God."

In the course of those years, it was rather hat that grew. In August 1939, the declaration of put an end to his efforts: in the middle of the nig the young priest and the people of his center in P had to leave everything behind. "We suddenly we did not require much to live and we could rapi be separated from all that we had loved and set up the enthusiasm of youth."

He soon volunteered to return to France and help with the support of prisoners of war. This came possible in October 1940. From Berlin, friend Reinhold Schneider wrote to him: "I can yet abandon the hope of seeing the true Europe restored.... It is a consolation to know that you sticking to your beautiful work of reconciliatio And again: "We must focus with all our strength what unites us."

For the first time, one of our European meetings is being held in Berlin. Berlin is a city characterized by great diversity, a city turned towards the future but also attempting to integrate the memory of a painful past, a city whose population has shown that it will not be discouraged by difficult situations.

While a minority, the Christians there strive to live out the Gospel. Belonging as they do to different denominations, their common witness and their ecumenical involvement are not an option but a vital necessity. Many parishes and congregations are places of human solidarity where the poor are welcomed.

The first visit of a Taizé brother to Berlin took place in 1955. When the wall was built in 1961, cutting the city in two, the brothers multiplied their visits to East Berlin. Many prayer groups were formed there in the 1980s. Brother Roger went in 1986 for a stage in the "pilgrimage of trust." It was necessary to ask the Communist authorities for permission to celebrate a prayer service, which took place simultaneously in two large churches, Catholic and Protestant, and brought together 6000 young people from East Germany. Permission had been granted on the condition that no participants come from the West. That period is now over and Berlin is a symbol for all those who, throughout the world, try to leap over walls of separation in order to spread trust.

LETTER 2012

Towards a New Solidarity

For a new solidarity among human beings to spring up at all levels—in families, communities, towns and villages, between countries and continents—courageous decisions are needed.[1]

Aware of the perils and the suffering that weigh upon humanity and the planet, we do not want to give in to fear and resignation.[2]

And yet a fine human hope is constantly threatened by disenchantment. Economic difficulties which are increasingly burdensome, the sometimes overwhelming complexity of societies, and helplessness in the face of natural disasters all tend to stifle the fresh shoots of hope.[3]

To create new forms of solidarity, could the time have come to make a greater effort to uncover the wellsprings of trust?

No human being, no society can live without trust.

When trust has been betrayed, the wounds leave marks that go deep.

Trust is not blind gullibility; it is not a facile word. It is the result of a choice, the fruit of an inner struggle. Each day we are called to set out once more from worry towards trusting.

TRUST AMONG HUMAN BEINGS

Opening ways of trust responds to an urgent need: although communication is becoming easier and easier, our human societies remain compartmentalized and fragmented.

Walls exist not just between peoples and continents, but also close to us, and even within the human heart. Think of

1 Although human solidarity has always been necessary, it needs to be constantly renewed and rejuvenated by being expressed in new ways. Today perhaps as never before in history, it is vital for the younger generations to prepare a fairer sharing of the resources of the earth, a more equitable distribution of wealth, between continents and within each country.

2 An impetus towards a new solidarity is possible. It is nourished by the conviction that the history of the world is not predetermined. Let us recall these few examples, among others: after the Second World War, a handful of political leaders, hoping against all hope, believed in reconciliation, and began courageously to build a Europe in solidarity; in 1986 a peaceful revolution accomplished a profound transformation in the Philippines; the great Polish popular movement Solidarność prepared, without violence, a road to freedom for several European countries; the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was unimaginable a few years before it happened; at the same time, Latin American countries set out on the road to democracy and began an undreamt of economic development, from which it is hoped that the very poor will be able to benefit without delay; the end of apartheid in South Africa and Nelson Mandela's outstretched hand led to a reconciliation beyond all hopes; more recently, we have witnessed the end of political violence in Northern Ireland and in the Basque countries.

3 The upheavals of the world economy pose questions for us. The geopolitical balance of power is changing. Inequalities are growing. The securities of yesterday have proven they no longer hold today. Could this be a reason to reflect more on the choices we make for our lives?

the prejudices between different nationalities. Think of the immigrants, so near and yet often so far away. Religions are still ignorant of one another, and Christians themselves are divided into a host of different denominations.

World peace begins in our hearts.

To initiate solidarity, we need to go towards others, sometimes with empty hands, listening, trying to understand the man or woman who does not think like us... and already a deadlocked situation can be transformed.

Let us try and be attentive to the weakest, to those who find no work.... Our attentiveness to the poorest can be expressed by getting involved in some form of social action. On a still deeper level, it is an attitude of openness to all: those close to us are also, in a certain sense, poor people who need us.[4]

In the face of poverty and injustice, some end up by revolting or are even tempted by aimless violence. Violence cannot be a way to change society.[5] But we need to listen to the young people who express their indignation in order to grasp the basic reasons for it.[6]

The impetus towards a new solidarity is nourished by deeply held convictions: the need for sharing is one of them.[7] This is an imperative that can bring together believers of different religions as well as believers and non-believers.

TRUST IN GOD

Solidarity between human beings can find a solid foundation in a reference to God, and yet trust in God is often called into question. Many believers have this negative experience in their places of work or study, and sometimes in their families.

There are many people unable to believe in a God who loves them personally. There are many too who, with great honesty, ask this question: how can I know if I have faith?

Today faith appears as a risk, the risk of trusting.

Faith does not mean first and foremost adhering to truths; it is a relationship with God.[8] It calls us to turn towards the light of God.

Far from leading to servility or stifling our personal fulfillment,[9] faith in God makes us free—free from fear, free for a life of service to those whom God entrusts to us.[10]

The more trust in God grows, the more our hearts widen to encompass all that is human everywhere in the world, in all cultures. Our hearts also become able to welcome the sciences and technologies which can alleviate suffering and allow societies to progress.

Like the sun, God is too dazzling for us to look at. But Jesus allows God's light to shine through. The whole Bible leads us to this trust: the absolutely transcendent God enters into our human reality and speaks to us in an understandable language.

What is distinctive about the Christian faith? The person Jesus, and a living relationship with him. We will never have finished comprehending this.

THE CHRIST OF COMMUNION

We are all pilgrims, seekers after truth. Believing in Christ does not mean possessing truth, but letting him, who is truth, take hold of us, and heading towards its full revelation.

What is and will always remain utterly and surprisingly new is that Jesus communicated God's light through a

4 Poverty does not only concern material life. It can consist in a lack of friends, an inability to find meaning in life, having no access to riches such as poetry, music, art—all that opens us to the beauty of creation.

5 In 1989 in East Germany, on the eve of the fall of the Berlin wall, the organizers of street demonstrations asked everyone to carry a lighted candle. One hand was needed to hold the candle, the other to protect it from the wind, and so there were no hands free for an act of violence.

6 Young Spaniards involved in the movement of the *indignados* in Madrid wrote to me: "Anything can happen if the situation does not get better. Many people are unemployed; they are losing their homes and their basic human rights. There is a lot of confusion and anger because of an unfair legal, economic and social system, a false democracy that does not guarantee citizen's rights, written in our constitution, to proper housing and to physical and mental integrity.... You asked what Taizé could do for us. Our answer: you can do what you are already doing, show us how to keep inner peace. We need your prayer and all the affection you have shown us. You can also help to share information with other young people who have the same concerns as we do."

7 Understanding for example that Western countries are not called so much to give humanitarian aid to Africa as to ensure justice to that continent. The same thing is true for other countries such as Haiti; the Haitian people, with so much dignity and such an authentic faith, has been one of the most mistreated and humiliated in history.

8 On many occasions, Pope Benedict XVI has emphasized that a personal relationship with God is the foundation of faith, for example when he wrote: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." (Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, Introduction, no. 1)

9 Our faith needs to be constantly purified of projections and fears, sometimes through an inner struggle between doubt and trust. Our mind takes part in this combat and is not satisfied with simple learning by rote. That is why many young people today are not content just to refer to Church traditions; to motivate the trusting of faith, personal participation and conviction are indispensable for them.

10 Commenting the words of the apostle Paul, "free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave of all" (1 Corinthians 9:19), Martin Luther wrote: "The Christian is a free man, the master of all things; he is not subject to anyone. The Christian is a servant full of obedience; he is subject to all." (Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*)

simple life. The divine life made him still more human.[11] By expressing himself fully in the simplicity of a human life, God renewed his trust in human beings; he enabled us to believe in humankind. Ever since then, we can no longer despair either of the world or of ourselves.

By accepting a violent death without responding with violence, Jesus brought God's love where there was only hatred.[12] On the cross, he refused fatalism and passivity. He loved to the very end and, despite the absurd and incomprehensible character of suffering, he kept on trusting that God is greater than evil and that death would not have the last word. Paradoxically, his suffering on the cross became the sign of his infinite love.[13]

And God raised him from the dead. Christ does not only belong to the past; he is here for us in each new day. He communicates the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live with God's own life.

The center of our faith is the Risen Christ, present in our midst, who has a personal bond of love with each person. Turning our eyes towards him awakens wonder and a deeper understanding of our existence.

When we look towards his light in prayer, it gradually begins to shine within us. The mystery of Christ becomes the mystery of our own life. Our inner contradictions and our fears may not be eliminated. But by the Holy Spirit, Christ enters fully into what worries us about ourselves, so that light is shed on the dark places in us.[14]

Prayer leads us at one and the same time towards God and towards the world.

Like Mary Magdalene who, on Easter morning, saw Christ alive, we are called to share this good news with others.[15]

The vocation of the Church is to gather into the peace of Christ women and men and children of all languages, of all nations, throughout the world. The Church is the sign that the Gospel speaks the truth; it is the Body of Christ, animated by the Holy Spirit. It makes the "Christ of communion" present.[16]

"When tirelessly the Church listens,[17] heals, and reconciles, it becomes what it is at its most luminous—a communion of love, of compassion, of consolation, a limpid reflection of the Risen Christ. Never distant, never on the defensive, freed from all forms of severity, the Church can let the humble trusting of faith shine right into our human hearts."[18]

TRYING TO BE "SALT OF THE EARTH"

The Christ of communion did not come to set Christians apart and form an isolated society out of them; he sends them out to serve humankind as a leaven of trust and

11 Jesus was not a great ascetic. He performed miracles, especially acts of healing, but at the decisive moment when he could have proved that he was the one sent by God, on the cross, there was the silence of God, a silence known to all who suffer and that he agreed to share. It was hard for the disciples to understand that Jesus was a poor messiah. They may have hoped that he would change the social or political conditions of the time; they did not realize that he had come principally to eradicate evil at its roots.

12 "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly." (1 Peter 2:23)

13 When confronted with the incomprehensible suffering of the innocent we are often at a loss. And the question, the cry that echoes throughout human history touches our hearts: where is God? We have no ready-made answers, but we can entrust ourselves to Christ who has conquered death and who is with us in our suffering.

14 Prayer, the contemplation of God's light, is also listening. Through the Scriptures we understand that God is the one who speaks to us and who sometimes questions us. And at times, Christ is for us the poor man who wants to be loved and who tells us, "I stand at the door and knock." (Revelation 3:20)

15 See John 20:11-18.

16 The "Christ of communion" is an expression of Brother Roger's. Similarly, the theologian from Berlin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, when he was very young, 21 years old, coined the expression "Christ existing as community." He wrote that "through Christ humanity is truly integrated into communion in God." (Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum communio*)

17 Everywhere in the Church, a ministry of listening could be practiced by men and women who would devote themselves to it. There are lay people able to undertake such listening, which is complementarity to that of the ordained ministry.

18 Brother Roger, *Peace of Heart in All Things*.

Upcoming stages in the pilgrimage of trust on earth

With an international group of young adults, Brother Alois will go to Geneva on Friday, March 2, 2012 to visit the World Council of Churches.

The third international young adult meeting in Africa will be held in Kigali, Rwanda, from November 14-18, 2012.

The 35th young adult European meeting will take place from December 28, 2012 to January 2, 2013 in Italy, in the city of Rome.

With brothers and young people from different continents, Brother Alois will go to Istanbul, January 4-6, 2013, to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, and the Christians of that city.

Messages received for the Berlin meeting: *see www.taize.fr*

peace.[19] A visible communion among Christians is not an end in itself but a sign in the midst of humanity: "You are the salt of the earth."[20]

By his cross and resurrection Christ has established a new solidarity between all human beings. In him the fragmentation of humanity into opposing groups is already overcome; in him all form one family.[21] Reconciliation with God entails reconciliation among human beings.[22]

But if the salt were to lose its saltiness.... It must be recognized that we Christians often obscure this message of Christ. In particular, how can we radiate peace if we remain divided?

We are at a point in history when we need to revitalize this message of love and peace. Will we do all we can so that, freed of misunderstandings, it can shine out in its original simplicity?

Can we, without imposing anything, journey alongside those who do not share our faith but who are searching for the truth with all their heart?[23]

In our attempt to create new forms of solidarity and open up ways of trust, there are, and there always will be, trials. At times they may seem to be overwhelming. So what then should we do? Is not our response to personal trials, and to those which other people endure, to love still more?

f. Alois

19 Though this service means taking the opposite tack from all that dehumanizes society, it is undertaken above all and always in a respectful and constructive dialogue with the different cultures of the world and of each historical period. "The leaven does not show its strength until it is brought close to the dough, and not just close, but mixed with the dough until it is indistinguishable from it." (Saint John Chrysostom, *Homily 46 on Matthew*)

20 Matthew 5:13.

21 Christ said: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). And the apostle Paul: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, man and woman" (Galatians 3:28).

22 See Ephesians 2:14-18. Christ destroyed the dividing-wall between God's people and the others; all have access to God. Solidarity cannot be limited to one family or nation; it reaches beyond all local and particular interests.

23 For instance by sharing about questions such as: What is the meaning of my life? What gives it a direction? What aim unifies my existence?

In 2015: Gathering for a New Solidarity

Over the next three and a half years, our "pilgrimage of trust on earth" will search for ways to put into practice the themes of this letter for a new solidarity.

A new solidarity that can bring together all who are pilgrims of peace, pilgrims of truth, whether believers or non-believers.

Three and a half years to enable young people from every continent to mobilize their energies, to gather together their longings, intuitions and experiences.

2012: Opening ways of trust among human beings.

2013: Uncovering the wellsprings of trust in God.

2014: Seeking visible communion among all who love Christ.

2015: Becoming "salt of the earth."

And, to recapitulate this search and to acquire new momentum,

in August 2015:

At Taizé, gathering for a new solidarity

the 75th anniversary of the Taizé Community
the 100th anniversary of Brother Roger's birth

So that as many young people as possible can be listened to, this gathering will be prepared for by meetings on every continent.

eginning in 1941, Franz Stock began tirelessly sit Parisian prison inmates, many of whom were risoned for acts of resistance. For them to see a man chaplain enter their cell was, at first glance, ppointing news. Yet, as a French priest would 'when we French could not enter the prison, Fa- Stock was a kind of messenger for us and for the ilies. From the beginning, he accomplished this with an extraordinary awareness and delicacy." going to meet the prisoners, he was convinced as visiting Christ himself: "I was in prison and visited me" (Matthew 25). And he brought s of the prisoners to their families, who came ee him at the chaplaincy in the evening, when eturned from his visits. One of these prisoners, nond Michelet, wrote in his memoirs that the ng priest had accomplished his ministry "with discretion that gave so much importance to the ntless services that did for us, risking his life to us often to save ours."

On Christmas Eve 1940, he prepared a young pris- r for his execution. This was the first of hundreds Father Stock would accompany to the end. In last letter to his children, another of those pris- rs sentenced to death wrote: "When you grow do not hold a grudge against anyone." That was mission to which Franz Stock dedicated himself: lo everything possible so that those men would in peace. He constantly visited, consoled, and sted—and did this unceasingly, during the long rs of war.

At the Liberation, the chaplain Stock was impris- d in his turn. As soon as possible, however, he ided not to return to his homeland but to focus the "new poor," the German prisoners of war in nce. With the support of some French bishops, Chartres and Orleans he began a "barbed-wire inary" for all German seminarians held captive France. On several occasions, the papal nuncio ncalli, later Pope John XXIII, visited him and ouraged him in his work.

In 1947, the closing of the seminary drew near. a farewell speech, Father Franz Stock made an ial assessment. "Those years were hard but full ife and courage, long but fruitful, rewarding and of promise. [...] When that community behind ped wire will be dissolved externally, may the it of true brotherhood reunite us in prayer for another." In fact, if those seeds scattered to the r winds would bear much fruit in the years fol- ing the war, for Franz Stock already the passing ternal life was being prepared—he died in 1948, he age of 44, after a life given for reconciliation.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD

Are the differences between Christians a problem or an asset?

The contemporary world takes the individual as a starting-point. Our contemporaries have a strong sense of the equality, or even the similarity, of all human beings, and so they are impatient with all natural or cultural distinctions. Each person should potentially be able to do everything, be free to invent his or her own life. Such an attitude leads, in practice, to an glorification of diversity. The identity of all is taken for granted but, concretely, plurality is what prevails.

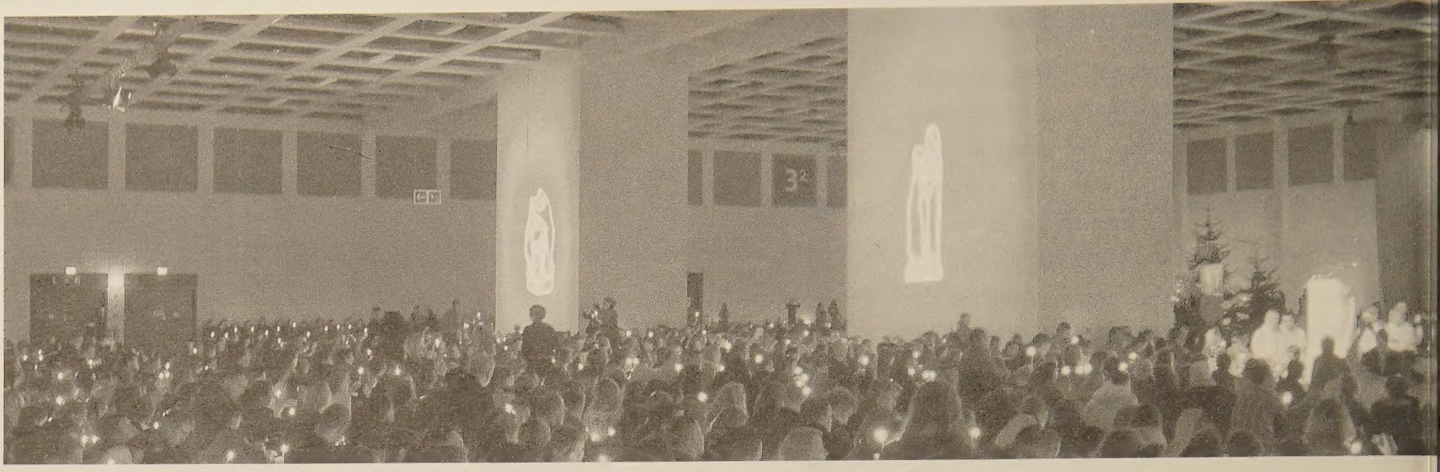
It is not surprising that such a vision of things does not foster community. What is the "glue" able to bond together all the identical and separate units? And so, in the life of the Church, it happens that the diversity of approaches is extolled while unity remains merely theoretical. And then, in reaction to this, some attempt to impose uniformity and to exclude anything that does not fit into the common mold.

The biblical outlook offers us a way out of this dead-end. It does not begin with the individual, but with a loving God who calls beings into existence (see Romans 4:17). And God does not call them one by one, but rather for a common endeavor. It is Jesus the Messiah who reveals God's project to us: humanity is invited to receive God's own life, the source of a universal friendship, in order to form one Body (see Colossians 3:15).

In this perspective, each person has an irreplaceable role to play and unique gifts to develop, but always in the context of an all-inclusive communion. I do not have to do everything and have everything, because other people will make up for my lacks. In fact, I even need them, since I cannot manage all alone. At the same time, my contribution is essential for the progress of the whole.

Saint Paul explains this by the well-known image of the body (see Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12). This metaphor brings together great diversity and deep unity. If the hand wanted to be the head at all costs, or the heart the foot, the whole body would cease to function. And even the seemingly most insignificant parts are absolutely necessary. In fact, we should not even speak of greater or lesser body parts, because it is not a question of competition but of one shared life.

Christians do not need to be afraid of their limits or deny the differences that constitute them. Knowing that they do not create their own existence from scratch, they must discover the specific gifts which God has placed in them so that these can bear fruit. They are called to put their gifts at the service of the entire Body. The same thing is true, moreover, of different Christian communities. Their "right to difference" only has meaning within the global project of God to "bring all things together with Christ as Head" (Ephesians 1:10). If we lose sight of this universal communion, then differences can indeed be a problem. If we remain within it, then they are a great asset, a reflection of the "multicolored grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).



be no divisions in the Church. And especially in Berlin, a city now united, but until twenty years ago divided by an unnecessary wall, one could see the unity that there should be among Christians. No more separation, but union among peoples. Only with trust and hope can this wall be torn down, so that we can live in community with all our Christian brothers and sisters. The task is difficult, but in Christ all the obstacles are eliminated.

To initiate solidarity, we need to go towards others, sometimes with empty hands, listening, trying to understand the man or woman who does not think like us... and already a deadlocked situation can be transformed.

Sam (England)

An inner change that I am taking away from Berlin is the knowledge that the love I feel for those around me does not detract from my love of God. Quite the opposite, they are one and the same. Even when those I love most do not share my faith, a love of humanity is always a love of God. Breaking down this wall in my heart has lead to a liberation and greater security in my faith. When we are at unity with ourselves and start to find inner peace, this is when we can begin to project this peace onto the world around us.

An impetus towards a new solidarity is possible. It is nourished by the conviction that the history of the world is not predetermined. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was unimaginable a few years before it happened. ***(Note 2)***

Qvinny (Netherlands)

During the European meeting I attended a workshop about the Berlin Wall. People from those days shared their experiences; there was a film and we went to see the last piece of the wall. The crowd of people was so large that unfortunately I had to miss a large part of the personal stories. However, some bits of the stories I remember ("What was the first thing you did after the wall fell?" "I went to Taizé!") and the film were very impressive. What struck me most was the extent to which, after being separated for so many years, the people on both sides of the wall still felt so connected, still saw Berlin as one city, and never accepted their separation.

This is the image that I will take home with me: that the wall of which you are so afraid in the morning can have fallen unexpectedly by nightfall. And that your children will dare to play on the remaining pieces of your fear.

Prayer leads us at one and the same time towards God and towards the world.

Emöke (Romania)

Midday, after the sharing in the parishes all over Berlin and in the evening, we all came together for the same reason—to meet each other through prayer. For an hour we tried to forget our tiredness after a full day, and also we tried to forget those problems we brought with us from home. I'm always amazed by the power of the silence. And now, when thousands of young adults were in silence trying to open their hearts to welcome the same God, I was even more amazed. These are true moments of honesty. We become one, and for some moments those walls between nations are broken down. We become one in Christ and we all speak a common language, the "language of faith."

The next European meeting

The 35th young adult European meeting will be held in Rome from December 28th, 2012 to January 2nd, 2013. In Rome, the European meeting will enable young people to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles and to the catacombs and give them the opportunity to pray at St. Peter's Basilica with the Pope. After mornings spent in the parishes of the city and the Lazio region, participants will gather for lunch in the symbolic place that is the "Circo Massimo" and then pray in cathedrals and large churches in the city center.

More information on the Berlin meeting

On the website www.taize.fr other information about the Berlin meeting was put on line: Brother Alois' meditations each evening, stories of the participants, messages from Church leaders, photos and videos.

Letter from Taizé

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